General Education Foundation Program

In Dialogue with Humanity

Course Description
The course invites students to investigate the problem of "humanity"—i.e., what it means to be human—at two levels: human as an individual and human as a social being. Students will be engaged in a direct dialogue with literary writers, philosophers and social reformers who address three fundamental questions: What is it that makes a "good" life for me? What is it that makes a "good" society for everyone? How do I make possible such a "good" life and "good" society?

Students are expected to read, discuss, and write about a wide range of texts extracted from influential classics in the humanities East and West. They will be encouraged to discover their own answers to the three questions by considering views and arguments expressed in the texts, and by exploring how far and in what ways such views and arguments may hold true for the contemporary world.

Where appropriate, the selected classic texts will be given bilingually to help students enter the world of classics and develop confidence and competence in approaching primary texts. Students will meet for one lecture and two tutorial sessions every week. Emphasis will be placed on students’ capacity to respond critically to the selected texts in oral and written presentations, in the form of class discussions, short write-ups and term papers. Class size will be kept small to maximize discussions and to facilitate intensive guidance on academic writing, in Chinese and/or English as specified by the instructor.

Target Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students should be able to:

• articulate effectively views about good life and good society in class and in academic essays;
• have an enhanced confidence in reading and discussing complicated texts from the humanities;
• evaluate the soundness of different approaches to good life and good society from multiple perspectives;
• discuss the relevance of arguments and views expressed in the selected texts to contemporary human conditions; and
• have enriched personal views on desirable life and ideal society.

Assessment
15% Engagement in discussions
10% In-class write-ups
25% Quizzes
50% Term papers
- Paper 1 (20%): 1,000-1,250 words in English; OR 1,200-1,600 characters in Chinese
- Paper 2 (30%): 1,250-1,500 words in English; OR 1,600-2,000 characters in Chinese

*All written assignments can be done in either Chinese or English.
Notes on Assessment

1. Engagement in discussion – this means all oral and written responses in class or before class that aim at contributing to the discussion. A student performs well if s/he consistently shows familiarity with the readings, cites from them adequately and creatively, presents ideas clearly and persuasively, shares inspiring insights, and enhances class interaction.

2. In-class write-ups – they aim at encouraging you to write down your comments, ideas, reflections, and questions at the beginning or the end of classes. They help you prepare for a class, recall what impresses you at the end of a class, and voice out what remains open questions that can be brought up in the next class. It is all right if these short writings do not contain a well-formed thesis, thorough discussion or complete argument. They do not have to be as structured as an essay, term paper or thesis. But they have to be written in complete sentences. They are assessed in terms of i) their contribution to the in-class discussion; and ii) the nature and quality of your reflection (originality, criticality, complexity).

3. Quizzes – short quizzes of multiple choices will be conducted regularly at the beginning of tutorial meetings to encourage you to keep up with the readings and also to help you check your familiarity with them.

4. Term papers – you are required to use the required readings as the main sources of these papers. You are not required to use secondary readings or readings outside of the course materials for these papers, although you are welcome to do so where you see fit. However, these secondary references should not out-balance the required readings as the main sources of the papers.

Course Pack and Library Collection

All required readings are collected in a Course Pack available for sale in the first class. We recommend you to buy your own Course Pack. A lot of efforts have gone into the production of the Course Pack, from copyright clearance to design to binding, and to keeping the cost down as much as we can. Please respect this labor of love and do not pirate-copy someone else’s Course Pack.

The required readings and recommended references, including Chinese translations of the required texts and related AV materials, are also available at UL Reserve Section, UC General Education Collection and NA General Education Collection.

Required Readings

Students will read selected excerpts from the following titles. Some titles are in Chinese, and an English translation for each of the titles (as given in square brackets) will be recommended to students in the English groups.

1. Self in Search of Self: My Potentials, My Value

2. **The Limits of Human Power: My Doubts, My Fear**
馮象譯, 《摩西五經》，香港: 牛津大學出版社，2006。 [*Holy Bible, New International Version.*]

3. **Self in Social Institutions: My Ideal Society**
Participating in Discussion – How to Do Well?

Minimal preparation for classroom discussion requires that you read, think about, and bring to class the text; be prepared to discuss the text; and show respect for other participants. The following guidelines differentiate contributors in the following areas: mastery of material, quality of ideas, effectiveness of argumentation, and general impression.

“A” Contributor
Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation as evidenced by frequent authoritative and/or creative use of textual/material evidence.
Ideas offered are always substantive (i.e., unusually perceptive, original, and/or synthetic) and provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class.
Improving Classroom Discussion
Agreements and/or disagreements are well substantiated and persuasively presented.
* If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.

“B” Contributor
☐ Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation as evidenced by competent and occasionally authoritative and/or creative reference to textual/material evidence.
☐ Ideas offered are usually substantive and provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class.
☐ Agreements and/or disagreements are fairly well substantiated and/or sometimes persuasive.
* If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

“C” Contributor
☐ Contributions in this class reflect satisfactory preparation as evidenced by at least some acquaintance with textual/material evidence.
☐ Ideas offered are sometimes substantive and provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for discussion.
☐ Sometimes insightful disagreements and agreements are voiced with little to no substantiation.
* If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat.

“D–F” Contributor
☐ Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation.
☐ Ideas are seldom substantive and provide few if any insights and never a constructive direction for the class.
☐ Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent.
* If this person were not a member of the class, valuable airtime would be saved.

Nonparticipant
☐ Little or nothing contributed in class; hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation.
* If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed. (Said persons need to leave this category and move into a contributor category.)

Compiled by Kristine S. Bruss. This is a slightly modified version of a guide credited to John Tyler of Brown University, Richard Murnane of Harvard, and others (http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/pedagogy/particip-assessm.shtml).